

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Anthony, and I am a resident of New Haven, CT. I am originally from Ecuador and migrated to the U.S. at eight years old. I'm a proud board member of CT Students for a Dream. I'm also a recipient of DACA and work full time as a radiation therapist.

I stand in support of HB 6616: An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status. Expanding access to HUSKY regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 26; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age. If Connecticut wants a future that includes healthy families and a stable, thriving and growing workforce that is ready to meet the needs of our future, Connecticut must ensure that these individuals have access to health coverage.

I've spent most of my adolescence and youth as an undocumented immigrant and I've experienced lack of access to affordable healthcare due to my immigrant status. This led me to live anxiously about getting hurt or becoming sick. One visit to the hospital left me in \$8,000 of debt. Acquiring DACA in my early 20's allowed me to gain legal employment and after years of working towards a degree in radiation therapy, I was able to get a job I'm passionate about that also provides healthcare benefits. This is not the case for 58% of the roughly 113,000 undocumented immigrants in CT do not have any form of health insurance coverage (compared to 95% of the general CT population who have healthcare).

Throughout my time organizing to support mutual aid efforts during the pandemic in New Haven, I've met and spoken to many undocumented families and individuals about the challenges they were facing. Many became unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and could not afford their rent, bills or have access to affordable healthcare due to their legal status. That is not fair especially when undocumented immigrants contribute roughly 145 million dollars in state and local taxes every year. This bill gives the 64,000 uninsured undocumented residents in CT the ability to seek preventive care and avoid developing chronic illness. I've also met patients undergoing radiation treatment for their cancer that could not afford to stop working while going through treatment because they were uninsured and were paying out of pocket for their life saving care. This can change. HB6616 will ensure more CT residents have access to affordable care. We cannot leave anyone behind in the fight for high quality, affordable and equitable health care.

I support HB 6616 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,  
Anthony Barroso

